

Early bilingualism and word order in Breton

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Ikerlan honen helburua bretoiera eskolaren bidez bigarren hizkuntza bezala garatzen duten haurren hitz-hurrenkera arakatzea da, lehen hizkuntzaren eragina zein den ikusteko. Egileak honela eratu du lana: sarreran, bretoieraren hitz hurrenkeraren ezaugarri orokorrak; lehen atalean, helduen hitz hurrenkera bretoieraz; bigarrenean, haurren hizkeraren hitz hurrenkera, eta, azkenik, ondorioak. Arakaturiko ekoizpenak 3-6 urte bitarteko eskola umeenak dira eta bretoieraz irakasten duten eskola ezberdinetan bilduak. Egilearen arabera helduek darabiltzaten hitz-hurrenkera ezberdinak haurren ekoizpenetan ere aurkitzen dira. Frantsesaren egituren eraginari dagokionez, eskolaratzearen hasieran handia da. Alabaina, 6 urte dituztenean, haurrek eskolak eta inguruak eskaintzen dizkieten egiturak bereganatu dituzte.

Giltz-Hitzak: Bigarren hizkuntza eskolan. Bretoiera-frantsesa. Elebitasun goiztiarra. Hitz-hurrenkera. Hizkuntza-jabekuntza. Hizkuntza-murgilketa. Hurrenkera ez-markatua. Hurrenkera markatua.

El fin de esta investigación consiste en analizar el orden de las palabras en las producciones de niños que aprenden el bretón en la escuela como segundo idioma, con el fin de detectar influencias de su idioma materno. El autor ha organizado este trabajo de la siguiente manera: introducción, características generales del idioma bretón en la primera parte, el orden de las palabras de los adultos en bretón en la segunda parte, el orden de las palabras en el habla de los niños y, finalmente, las conclusiones. Las producciones analizadas han sido recogidas de niños de 3 a 6 años de edad que han recibido enseñanza en bretón en distintas escuelas. Según el autor, los distintos órdenes de palabras utilizadas por adultos se encuentran también en la producción de estos niños. La influencia del francés es fuerte durante la etapa inicial de la enseñanza. A la edad de 6 años, sin embargo, los niños han adquirido las estructuras que ofrecen la escuela y el entorno.

Palabras Clave: Bretón/francés. Bilingüismo a temprana edad. El orden enfático. Adquisición del idioma. Orden no enfático. Inmersión en la educación. Adquisición de segundo idioma en la escuela. Orden de palabras.

Le but de cette étude consiste à analyser l'ordre des mots dans les productions d'enfants qui apprennent le breton à l'école comme langue seconde, afin de détecter des influences de leur langue maternelle. L'auteur a organisé ce travail de la manière suivante: introduction, caractéristiques générales de la langue bretonne dans la première partie, l'ordre des mots des adultes en breton dans la seconde partie, l'ordre des mots dans le langage des enfants et finalement, les conclusions. Les productions analysées ont été recueillies chez des enfants de 3 à 6 ans qui ont reçu un enseignement en breton dans différentes écoles. Selon l'auteur, les différents ordres de mots utilisés par les adultes se retrouvent également dans la production de ces enfants. L'influence du français est importante durant l'étape initiale de l'enseignement. A l'âge de 6 ans, pourtant, les enfants ont acquis les structures qu'offrent l'école et l'entourage.

Mots Clés: Breton/français. Bilinguisme dès le plus jeune âge. L'ordre emphatique. Acquisition de la langue. Ordre non-emphatique. Immersion dans l'éducation. Acquisition d'une langue seconde à l'école. Ordre des mots.

INTRODUCTION

This is an approach of early bilingualism as it is being studied in a European project in our four Celtic countries, particularly in Brittany. It offers an opportunity to survey the question of word order in Breton, as compared to French, which is the dominant language of a majority of children in contact with Breton. But it may also be relevant to compare the data thus collected very recently to a survey of syntactic patterns used in adult speech from a neighbouring area in Brittany (Favereau 1984).

Syntax in general and word order in particular are indeed very different in both languages. French has obviously, as stressed in all grammars, an SVO (subject-verb-object) structure, called *logical order*, which tends to develop and has become more common in even interrogative or interrogative-negative sentences - at least in colloquial usage, such as:

- (1) *tu viens? (/ viens-tu?)*
[you come?]
(are you) coming?
- (2) *vous faites du cidre? (/ faites-vous du cidre?)*
[you make cider?]
(are you) making cider?
- (3) *t'as pas cent balles? (/ est-ce que tu n'as pas...?)*
[you haven't got some bob?]
(haven't you) got some bob?

Breton too uses this SVO structure, but it is by far less common in traditional syntax or discourse and even standard usage (Stephens 1982).

This is very clear in the language of the older generation of bilingual speakers in Lower Brittany, for whom Breton was the mother tongue and French one learned at school. The influence of Breton syntax is crystal-clear in (xVS) sentences where local French will be warped by local speakers in order to follow Breton word order, which is quite shocking or at least very exotic to any speaker of standard French, as for instance:

- (4) *du café tu auras? (/ vous prendrez / prendrez-vous du café?)*
[coffee you will have / take?]
(will you) have some coffee?
- (5) *fatigué il est, mais malade il n'est pas! (/ il est fatigué, mais il n'est pas malade)* [tired he is but ill he is not]
he isn't ill but tired
- (6) *dormir il fait, manger il ne fait pas (/ il dort, mais il ne mange pas)*
[sleep he does, but eat he doesn't]
he does eat, but he doesn't eat

this, as far as we know, has not been studied at length so far, as local varieties of regional and less of all *ethnic* French are very little on the agenda of academic research.

1. WORD ORDER IN ADULT BRETON

Breton syntax has only been studied recently and little overall research has been yet published on word order (Urien 1987; Stephens 1982).

There are many reasons to this late development of syntactic research. The Breton language was excluded from State schooling and teaching for almost a century. Some academic research did exist, as Breton was taught (rarely) at University level, but it was mainly dialectology.

Many grammars of Breton appeared at the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, but most of them centered on morphology. Other grammar-books, mostly normative in their approach, avoid any comparison between the syntax of the two languages in contact, even if the structure of Breton syntax is well explained, the main *golden rule* (Kervella 1947) or syntactic constraint being that verb when conjugated always comes second, after a subject, an object, or a verbal noun in periphrastic constructions. In opposition to an official policy which led people to believe that Breton was a *patois*, they wished to stress the unity and coherence of the grammatical structure of Breton, as noble as French or Latin, and so theirs was a voluntarist stand to *normalize* a language that was split in at least two (or three) norms, inherited from religious standards based on the Breton-speaking dioceses well into this century.

A good insight into the question of word order has been provided by Corbel (1981), where he distinguished *primary syntax*, non-emphatic or neutral in principle) and *emphatic syntax*, more precisely syntax that had originated as an emphatic one and remains so in many ways). This distinction will be used here to exemplify the different percentages, as analysed in a survey of several hundred pages of spoken *spontaneous* Breton from Central Brittany (Favereau 1984, 1997).

This *syntaxe première*, which is used in a majority of clauses, corresponds to structures containing the verbal particle *e* (from *e(z)* and variants, with mixed mutation of verbs), that is the following pattern: xVS, or A + e + V (+ S + O) - A being an adjective or past participle (called a verbal adjective in Breton), an adverb, or any other attribute, among which indirect objects, V being for verbs, S for subjects, and O for other (direct) objects. Here are a few simple examples:

- (7) *prest eo Yann*
 [ready is John]
 John is ready
- (8) *sirius e oant*
 [serious (they) were]
 they were serious
- (9) *fur e vez ar vugale*
 [wise will be the children]
 the children are wise
- (10) *aze emañ Herve*
 [there (here) is Herve]
 idem
- (11) *bremañ e oar skrivañ*
 [now (he) can write]
 he can write now
- (12) *pegoulz e vint pare?*
 [when will (they be) o.k.?
 idem

(13) *bez' ez eus re all!*
[indeed are others!]
there are more of them!

(14) *hemañ eo ma heni*
[this (one) is my own]
idem

(15) *o lenn emaint*
[reading (they) are]
they are reading

This syntactic pattern seems to be the basic one in spontaneous Breton. In this survey, in which about half of all clauses appear to be independent sentences or main clauses, a majority of these (55%) use this pattern, even though the verbal particle *e(z)* disappears very often in connected speech and is not used generally before the copula (*eo*):

(16) *berr eo an devezhioù bremañ*
[short is the days now]
the days are short now

(17) *moarvad eo gwir*
[presumably is true]
it's right presumably

(18) *tapet 'n'eus hennezh 'hanon*
[cheated has that one me]
he cheated me

(19) *gant ar saout 'veze laezh*
[with the cows () would be milk]
there would be milk from the cows

(20) *'us d'hon fenn 'teue*
[above our head came]
it came above our heads

It is also the more common structure after *setu* (= so), although both structures can be found (21 / 22), as well as after *ha* (= and, which is not then coordination *stricto sensu*):

(21) *setu 'oa chomet e benn war ar c'hog*
[so was stayed his head on the cock]
so, the cock had saved its head

(22) *setu, an dra-mañ 'rae un tamm moneiz...*
[so, this thing made some money]
so, some money was got out of this

(23) *(chom ahe) ha 'h an da weled*
[(stay here) and will go to look]
I'll go and see

(24) *ha 'h ae gant e hent*
[and went with his way]
and he went his way

- (25) *hag on gwall gontant deus outi*
[and am quite happy with her]
and I'm quite satisfied with her

This can be found in other varieties of Breton, such as those recorded in the *vannetais* dialect of Groix (Ternès 1970):

- (26) *hag e taen d'ar gêr geti*
[and came home with her]
and I came home...
- (27) *hag eh eze a di da di...*
[and would go from house to house]
and he...
- (28) *serret ho peg ha 'tigoro ma hani...*
[shut your mouth and will open mine]
shut your mouth and mine will open

This structure is also present in analytic sentences, very common in the spoken language everywhere, as stressed by Urien (1996), such as:

- (29) *te e' skolaer ar Gilli*
[you is the teacher from Guilly]
you are...
- (30) *c'hwi e' Fer?*
[you is Fer?]
is it you Fer? (is Fer your name?)
- (31) *hounnezh eo o micher*
[that is their job]
idem

Even some emphatic sentences (emphatic in their meaning here) can be analysed as such, like those beginning with *bez'*:

- (32) *be' veze kalz merc'hed 'sambles*
[there were many women together]
idem
- (33) *be' eo bet tomm (/ bet eo tomm...)*
[indeed has been hot]
it has...
- (34) *o vale emaoe'h?*
[walking are (you)?]
are you walking?

The other structures use the verbal particle *a* (which was originally a relative one, as in Welsh). In our corpus, they remain a clear minority.

The first pattern is an SVO one: S + a + V (+ O). It can be found in about a quarter of the corpus. But two forms of usage can be distinguished. The first one, traditional usage, is emphatic indeed, as it puts emphasis on the subject that comes first and that is thus topicalised:

- (35) *Ann-Mari 'gomande!*
[Ann-Mary commanded!]
Ann-Mary was the one who commanded (family)!
- (36) *Mamm a lenne ar re-se*
[Mumm read those]
Mother, for one, read those
- (37) *me a wel sklaer*
[I see clearly]
I, for one, can see all right

The other usage is closer to what is called in French *construction logique*. It seems to be more neutral, and maybe influenced by French (Trépos 1962, p. 359 *au cours des dernières générations*), and it seems to have spread first in *vannetais* (closer to the linguistic border) as well as in Léon (influenced by Brest and perhaps by clerics' Breton). It is possible as well that this usage obeys some communicational constraints, that is the necessity for the speaker to organize several items:

- (38) *ar moteur 'skoe founnus*
[the engine stroke rapidly]
idem
- (39) *ar pezhioù-kanol 'veze degaset tostañ ma c'halled*
[the guns (canon) would be brought as near as possible]
idem

This is why it is difficult to assess the status of a personal pronoun coming first in many examples, as the emphasis varies from one generation to another and from a *parler* to the next: it is definitely more emphatic in *kerne*, *leon* and *treger* (three dialects) than in *vannetais* (the fourth dialect), and more rare in Central Brittany than in coastal areas. Thus, *c'hwi 'oar...* - you kwon -, used by some for *vous savez* will be felt as meaning *vous*, *vous savez*, because the plainly non-emphatic or neutral way of expressing *vous savez* is obviously: *goùd' a rit* (or even *goùd' ouzoc'h* with some insistence!), or more often, in an *incise*, *'ouzoc'h 'walc'h* (Po-her), *'vel ouzoc'h* (Trégor)...

Here again, one may mention an anaphoric structure which is quite common and no exception at all, sometimes called a *false subject*:

- (40) *me eo mat din!*
[I is good to me!]
it's ok as far as I'm concerned
- (41) *un tammig son eo gwelloc'h deoc'h?*
[a small piece song is better to you]
do you prefer some small song?
- (42) *me eo/zo klañv va biz*
[I am/is sore my finger]
my finger got sore

The next emphatic structure has the infinitive or verbal noun coming first in *periphrastic* conjugation (with *ober* as an auxiliary verb) on the following pattern: *nV + ober + S (+ O)*... It is indeed an emphatic structure (as proved by its odd use in local French: *boire il fait*), at least originally, although it may have been somewhat worn out by usage. It appears in 6% of the to-

tal corpus of independent or main clauses surveyed. It corresponds to some emphasis on the verb, that is the action itself. But in several cases (in colloquial expressions, especially) it has become quite neutral (Stephens 1992), following the habit of organizing several items or pieces of information in that way, as the entire sentence is made of new information without any contrast between old and new (Urien):

- (43) *kemer 'rae kalz a boan gante*
[take (she) did much care of them]
she did take much care of them

- (44) *diskiñ 'rae ar vugale gante*
[learn did the children with 'em]
children did learn with them

It is possible to add an adverb or a complement to the verbal noun as the fronted constituent becomes a VP:

- (45) *harpañ mat 'raen ma zreid*
[push well did my feet]
I did push my feet

- (46) *kridiñ 'walc'h 'rit 'oa aet droug ba e gorf!*
[know enough do (you) he got angry]
you must know that he had got angry;

- (47) *reiñ o bleud d'ar boloñjer 'vit kaout bara 'raent*
[give their flour to the baker to get bread did (they)]
they did give their flour...

Such a use of *a-walc'h* has even become very common after some verbs:

- (48) *kompren 'walc'h 'rit!*
[understand enough do (you)!]
you understand!

Other emphatic conjugations do exist using *e*:

- (49) *bez' oa tud!*
[there were people]
there were many people, indeed!
- (50) *oc'h ober Petra emaoe'h aze? (> 'h o'r Petra 'm'oc'h ahe?...)*
[doing what are you there?]
what are you doing there?

The last emphatic structure, using *a*, has the object (direct complement) first, that is: O + a + V (+ S...), that is plainly VSO. It is much rarer (only 4% of the corpus), though, for it remains quite emphatic indeed and could hardly be neutral, as shown in these examples:

- (51) *ur feurm vad 'zalc'he o moereb*
[a good farm held their aunt]
their aunt held a good farm (that was)
- (52) *leor Doue a lenne un tamm bemdez*
[God's book - the gospel - read (she) every day]
she read the (Protestant) Bible every day

- (53) *diw pe deir micher 'rae ar vugale diwar ar maes*
[two or three jobs did the children from the countryside]
country children did 3 or 3 jobs

Such structures can be very ambiguous indeed, especially if Object and Subject could be interchangeable in meaning:

- (54) *ul logodenn 'n'eus debret ar c'hazh*
[a mouse has eaten the cat]
it's a mouse the cat ate

Negative sentences have been studied separately, as two patterns exist there too. The first one is typically non-emphatic:

- (55) *n'eo ket gwir*
[it isn't true]
idem
- (56) *n'eo ket normal (ar voutik-mañ)!*
[it isn't normal (this business)!]
idem

The other one has the subject first: S + n + V (+ O). Although it must have been emphatic originally, or even pleonastic, it tends to become as common as the first one, plainly non-emphatic, maybe under the influence of bilingualism (French / Breton), but also owing to the necessity of striking a balance between the different parts of the discourse:

- (57) *an dud ne gredont netra*
[the people don't believe anything]
nobody believes anything
- (58) *ar gaouenn hag an toud 'vênt ket klevet ken*
[the (eagle) owl and the little owl aren't heard any longer]
one doesn't hear owls (and little owls) any more

Whereas emphasis plainly remains in many other cases:

- (59) *an douar 'gresk ket!*
[the earth doesn't grow]
idem
- (60) *digarez na vanko ket,*
[pretexts won't be short]
they won't be short of excuses

An anaphoric *false subject* can be used in a negative structure:

- (61) *ar go(z)ed 'vez ket e'mm da zirenkañ anehe*
[the moles there will be no need to disturb them]
moles won't have any need to be disturbed

Other structures are also emphatic as well, which have an adjective or an adverb, or even an infinitive, coming first:

- (62) *gouest da labourat 'oant ket!*
[able to work (he) was not]
he was not able to work!

- (63) *kouraj ne oa ket kollet*
[courage was not lost]
they did give up
- (64) *labourat (& labourer) douar 'ray ket!*
[farming / farmer (he) won't do]
he will never be a farmer / farming man
- (65) *biskoazh lapous n'o doa-int gwelet ken bras all!*
[never, bird had they see as big as that]
they had never seen such a huge bird!

This clearly shows that negative sentences tend to follow corresponding structures in the affirmative, as examined previously.

2. WORD ORDER IN CHILD SPEECH

The corpus of child speech used here is what has been collected during the first year of the study, that is 1995, mostly among children from three to six years old from different schools in a cross-sectional study (awaiting a longitudinal study that is being currently recorded). In the sample that has been chosen here, we can distinguish between non-emphatic and emphatic structures. Emphatic (or rather SVO) structure come first, as we have kept the classification of the corpus, following the age of the children (45 months by 119, 64 months by 129, 72 months by 141):

- (101) *an aval zo kouezhet*
[the apple is fallen]
the apple has fallen down
- (102) *unan zo glas*
[one is blue / green]
idem
- (103) *se zo ur garigell*
[this is a wheelbarrow]
idem
- (104) *se zo glas (< petra zo glas?)*
[this is blue (< what is blue?)]
idem
- (105) *se ive zo fleur*
[this too is flowers]
these are flowers too
- (106) *se zo glas (< glas?)*
[this is blue (< blue? - is it?)]
idem
- (107) *Kerzu zo du*
[December is black]
idem

- (108) *me zo bet e-barzh*
[I is been inside]
I have been in it
- (109) *me 'oar c'hoari...*
[I know play(ing)]
I know how to play
- (110) *unan zo kouezhet*
[one is/has fallen]
one has fallen
- (110b) *kouezhet eo*
[fallen is]
he has fallen
- (111) *Spot zo o lakaat...*
[Spot is putting...]
idem
- (112) *me 'c'hell mont*
[I can go]
idem
- (113) *an daou-se zo droch*
[those two are daft]
idem
- (114) *hennezh zo kontant*
[this one is satisfied]
he's satisfied
- (115) *me'm eus unan e-giz-se*
[I have one like this]
idem
- (116) *me zo bet *da walc'hiñ*
[I have been *to wash]
I have been washing
- (117) *an heol eo se*
[the sun is this]
this is the sun
- (118) *peogwir e oa bras-bras*
[for it was big-big]
as it was very big
- (119) *ha 'ma' marv Piou-Piou*
[and is dead Piou-Piou]
PP is/lies dead
- (120) *hag e oa ur vag o tremen*
[and was a boat passing]
and there was...

- (121) *a-raok e oa 'barzh ar *klos (= skol)*
[before was in(side) the (school)]
he was in the school before
- (122) *hag e vez skrivet ive 'barzh ar skol*
[and will write too in(side) the school]
and one writes too at school
- (123) *mod-all eo ruz*
[otherwise is red]
it's red otherwise
- (124) *war an daol eo melen*
[on the table is yellow]
it's yellow...
- (125) *war e gein un tamm 'neus gwenn*
[on its back a bit has white]
it has got a bit of white on its back
- (126) *ret 'voa la'hañ ar goulou*
[necessary was put out the light]
you must have turned out the light
- (127) *e-giz-se 'oa bravoc'h*
[that way was nicer]
it was nicer that way
- (128) *kemeret 'm eus sac'h ma vreur (= breur)*
[taken have my brother's satchel]
I have taken my brother's satchel)
- (129) *yen eo an amzer bremañ*
[cold is the weather now]
the weather is cold now
- (130) *aze zo unan*
[there is one]
there is one there
- (131) *bout zo unan*
[(be) is one]
there is one
- (132) *graet eo bet gant ar reoù bras (= vras)*
[done has been by the big ones]
it has been done by the big ones (girls)
- (133) *mont a reomp d'ober*
[go (we) are to do]
we're going to do (it)
- (134) *klevet 'm eus trous pa'm eus troet*
[heard have (I) noise when have turned]
I've heard noise when I turned

- (135) *daw din kaout ur gordenn*
[positive to me to have a rope]
I need...
- (136) *tokoù 'mo*
[hats will (I) have]
I'll have hats
- (137) *kouezhet eo, met n'on ket kouezhet*
[fallen is, but I'm not fallen]
he has fallen, but I didn't
- (138) *sellet 'm eus*
[looked have (I)]
I've looked (at it)
- (139) *klask a ran al lec'h*
[search I do the place]
I'm looking for...
- (140) *aet eo war an dour*
[gone is on the water]
it has gone on the water
- (141) *sellet 'm eus deus an tele*
[looked have (I) at the telly]
I've...
- (142) *marv eo an tad*
[dead is the father]
the father is dead
- (143) *gwelet 'm eus*
[seen have (I)]
I've seen (it)
- (144) *aet eo kuit*
[gone is away]
he's gone away
- (145) *ha gwelet hon eus ivez ar yer*
[and seen have (we) too the hens]=
and we saw hens too
- (146) *peogwir a ra trouz*
[since makes noise]
as it makes noise
- (147) *ur wech hon eus dastumet ar vioù*
[once have (we) collected the eggs]
we collected the eggs once
- (148) *'Oa e-giz-se*
[Was like this]
it was like this

- (149) *E oa glas ha melen*
 [Was blue and yellow]
 it was blue and yellow
- (150) *'M eus tri c'hazh*
 [Have (I) three cats]
 I've got three cats.

SVO structure is used by the youngest children first, as could be expected from bilinguals that master French syntax from home (Stephens 1995, quoting Hamers and Blanc 1989 as well as Hoffman 1991). This is characteristically the case of 101, where AVS would be more natural speech, at least among adults (*kouezhet eo an aval* = the apple has fallen down).

But SVO is justified in several examples, in answering a question that entails such a word order as for example 104 (*se zo glas < petra zo glas?*), or when the subject proves to be an indefinite as in 102 (*unan zo glas*) or again 110 (*unan zo kouezhet* - all the more so as the opposite AVS structure is aptly used elsewhere in 110b: *kouezhet eo...*).

On the contrary, AVS would be expected in some utterances containing the demonstrative *se* (103, 105), where the name would give the information more readily. In 106, the other structure (*glas eo*) would be preferable, as the question is *glas?* (without using the copula, but meaning it). In a similar way, younger children tend to use the personal pronoun *me* in all instances (108, 109, 112, 114, 115), whereas synthetic conjugation would have been more proper in most cases, probably because they do not master it as well as the neutralized conjugation yet.

On the whole, SVO seems to be used adequately in about half these occurrences, even if another structure could have been preferred (but stylistic justification can be found, for instance in 107: *Kerzu zo du*). As noted by J. Stephens (1995:60): *SVO structures are frequent in the data, but this can be explained by discourse consideration and the general prominence of the subject. It should not be considered a direct influence of French as the children are capable of using alternative structures.*

These alternative structures, which could be called the basic ones of adult native speakers, are more numerous in the sample given here (107-147), and they correspond roughly to the whole range of *syntaxe première* (primary syntax) that has been illustrated in spontaneous Breton from the Poher area. AVS is the most common, using a verb after an adjective (126, 129, 142) or a past participle (128, 132, 134, 137, 138, 140, 141, 143, 144), an adverb (130) or adverbial phrase (121, 123, 127), and an indirect object (124, 125, 147)... In a very appropriate expression, we find the ellipsis of the copula, as in adult speech (135: *daw din kaoud ur gor-denn / daw eo din...*). Anaphoric sentences are attested in 117 (using the copula when both fronted object and subject after the verb are definite). On the opposite, emphatic assertions with non-emphatic structures like *bez' oa tud* (49) are present in the form of its synonym *bout*.

Concerning coordination after *ha*, child speech seems to reproduce what has been noticed in adult discourse.

Subordination is used several times and has been mentioned, though out of the range of the present approach (as the standard word order of subordinates is VSO after a conjunction like *ma*, *pa...* or the verbal particle *e...*). Temporal clauses are correctly used (134: *pa'm eus troet*). No conditional subordinate clause (beginning with *ma*) has been produced, as far as one could see. Concerning subordinates expressing cause, two instances appear (118 and 146 *peogwir a ra trouz - a* instead of *e* is a common feature of the Trégor dialect), which is

the norm, as opposed to the colloquial use of X_Y after *peogwir* in a para-syntactic manner (*peogwir* being then considered as *p'eo gwir* - since or as it is - Hewitt 1985).

The other structures, which have been labelled as emphatic and are more rarely used, appear a number of times. Examples 133 and 139 illustrate the periphrastic conjugation (139: *klask a ran...*). On the other hand, use of the direct complement first in a topicalized position (that has permeated through local French (4, 5, 6) is evidenced in 136 (*tokou 'mo*).

Negative sentences have also been produced (137), without using the personal pronoun *me*, which would have stressed the subject of the action.

Three faulty sentences have been listed at the end of the children's corpus (148, 149, 150). Only one (150) is plainly incorrect and will be analysed in some length, all the more so as it not infrequent in the case of learners and bilingual school-children in particular, while it remains definitely shocking to any Breton speaker, except maybe in the *vannetais* area, where it can be heard of late, because of a confusion between the first consonant of '*m eus*' (that is M) and the contracted form of the personal pronoun *m'* < *me* (only '*m eus aon*' = I'm afraid, meaning I suppose, I hope... is acceptable and even very much used indeed). This error can also be explained by the abnormal status of "to have", which is no verb in Breton, but a verbal locution or phrase: '*m eus*' simply stands for "belongs to me" (as in Middle Welsh *Am bo fordd!* = Let me have a way!), and the object pronoun '*m*' happens to sound just like the apocope of the subject pronoun '*m*'!

But 149 (*E oa e-giz-se*), though breaking the rules that have been edicted, is acceptable, for this apparently non-grammatical structure is very common indeed in colloquial speech: this SVO structure is quite frequent in most dialects with verbs such as *bezañ*, *mont*, *dont*, etc... But such a use of VSO must be felt as idiomatic and pertinent, and 148 sounds much less probable or even acceptable than *E-giz-se 'oa* in adult speech.

3. CONCLUSIONS

What can be stated in conclusion is that almost the whole range of syntactic patterns that adult Breton-speakers will use can be found, more or less, in this corpus of child speech, limited as it is. Even the proportion of emphatic and non-emphatic (or neutral) structures seems to be found in our sample, in the mouth of the older children at least. For the influence of French syntactic structures, so very different from the Breton ones (that is French SVO / Breton X_YSY), is stronger at the beginning of the schooling period through immersion (from the age of two) than later by the age of six, for they tend to diminish as the children acquire richer structures from both school and environment, hopefully.

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